United Nations A/C.5/62/SR.41

General Assembly
Sixty-second session

Official Records

Distr.: General
7 July 2008

Original: English

Fifth Committee

Summary record of the 41st meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 15 May 2008, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Ali ..... (Malaysia)
Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Ms. McLurg

Contents

Agenda item 143: Financing of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus

Agenda item 144: Financing of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

This record is subject to correction. Corrections should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned *within one week of the date of publication* to the Chief of the Official Records Editing Section, room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza, and incorporated in a copy of the record.

Corrections will be issued after the end of the session, in a separate corrigendum for each Committee.

08-34021 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 143: Financing of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (A/62/649, A/62/718 and Corr.1, A/62/779 and A/62/781/Add.9)

Agenda item 144: Financing of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (A/62/737, A/62/755 and A/62/781/Add.8)

1. **Mr. Sach** (Controller), introducing the performance report on the budget of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) for the period from 1 July 2006 to 30 June 2007 (A/62/649), said that the General Assembly, in its resolution 60/270, had appropriated funding of $44,831,400 and that expenditure had been $47,347,900, resulting in an overexpenditure of $2,516,500, representing a 5.6 per cent increase compared to the approved budget. The main causes of the variance were increased military contingent requirements, owing to the rotation of one contingent by commercial means rather than by aircraft provided by a troop-contributing country, and increased national staff requirements, owing to two consecutive revisions of the national staff salary scale. The General Assembly was invited to appropriate and assess an additional $2,516,500, representing the overexpenditure, for the maintenance of the Force during the period from 1 July 2006 to 30 June 2007 and to decide how to treat other income for the period ended 30 June 2007 amounting to $1,212,700.

2. Introducing the note by the Secretary-General on financing arrangements for UNFICYP for the period from 1 July 2007 to 30 June 2008 (A/62/779), he said that the General Assembly, in its resolution 61/280, had appropriated $46,587,400 for the maintenance of the Force. Additional requirements of $3,646,500 represented an increase of 7.8 per cent. The main causes of the variance were increased requirements for the staff officers of military contingents and for United Nations police officers, owing to changes in support arrangements.

3. The General Assembly was invited to appropriate $3,646,500 to maintain the Force from 1 July 2007 to 30 June 2008, including $1,166,700 of the net appropriation to be funded through voluntary contributions from the Government of Cyprus, in addition to the $46,587,400 already appropriated under resolution 61/280, and to assess the total amount of $2,479,800, representing the balance of the additional appropriation, comprising $2,376,475 for the period from 1 July 2007 to 15 June 2008 and $103,325 for the period from 15 to 30 June 2008, should the Security Council decide to extend the mandate of UNFICYP.

4. Introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the budget for UNFICYP for the period from 1 July 2008 to 30 June 2009 (A/62/718 and Corr.1), which represented a proposed total of $54,943,000, he said that the sum concerned was $8,355,600, or 17.9 per cent, higher than the resources approved for 2007/08. The main causes of the variance were the increased cost of commercial aircraft charter services for the rotation of troops, the increased cost of goods and services procured locally owing to the appreciation of the Cyprus pound against the United States dollar and increased requirements for United Nations police owing to the full provision of mission subsistence allowance.

5. The General Assembly was invited to appropriate $54,943,000 to maintain the Force from 1 July 2008 to 30 June 2009, including $24,041,766 to be funded through voluntary contributions from the Government of Cyprus ($17,541,766) and the Government of Greece ($6.5 million), and to assess $30,901,234 at a monthly rate of $2,575,102 should the Security Council decide to continue the mandate of UNFICYP.

6. Introducing the performance report on the budget of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) for the period from 1 July 2006 to 30 June 2007 (A/62/737), he said that the General Assembly, in its resolution 60/121 B, had appropriated funding of $1,091,242,800 and that expenditure had been $1,085,127,900, leaving an unencumbered balance of $6,114,900, representing an implementation rate of 99.4 per cent. The main causes of the variance were lower military contingent costs, owing to reduced requirements for the reimbursement of troop-contributing countries for contingent-owned equipment, reduced requirements for fresh rations and fewer than planned rotations of troops, and reduced air transportation requirements. The General Assembly was invited to decide how to treat the unencumbered balance of $6,114,900, as well as other income and adjustments amounting to $55,462,400.

7. Introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the budget for MONUC for the period from 1 July 2008 to 30 June 2009 (A/62/755), the

submission of which had been delayed by the additional technical and substantive consultations required in connection with arrangements for local elections, he said that the proposed sum of $1,191,372,300 was $78,632,800, or 7.1 per cent, higher than the resources approved for 2007/08. The main causes of the variance were increased air transportation requirements, owing to the deployment of six additional fixed-wing aircraft and 29 additional rotary-wing aircraft in support of local elections; increased national staff requirements, owing to the proposed establishment of 568 additional national posts, comprising 22 National Officers and 546 national General Service staff; and increased requirements for United Nations Volunteers and general temporary assistance, owing to the temporary deployment of additional personnel in support of local elections.

8. The General Assembly was invited to appropriate $1,191,372,300 to maintain the Mission from 1 July 2008 to 30 June 2009; to assess $595,686,150 for the period from 1 July to 31 December 2008; and to assess $595,686,150 for the period from 1 January to 30 June 2009 at a monthly rate of $99,281,025, should the Security Council decide to continue the Mission's mandate.

9. **Ms. McLurg** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the Advisory Committee report on the financing of UNFICYP (A/62/781/Add.9), said that, for the current period, the Secretary-General projected an overexpenditure of $3,646,700, mainly resulting from revised support arrangements for military staff officers and United Nations police officers; a revised salary scale in effect for national staff as of 1 January 2008; increased utility and maintenance costs caused by exchange rate fluctuations; and increased ground transportation and fuel costs. In his note on the financing arrangements for UNFICYP for 2007/08 (A/62/779), the Secretary-General indicated that the budget of UNFICYP was unable to absorb the additional requirements, which represented 7.8 per cent of its approved budget for the period and therefore requested the General Assembly to appropriate $3,646,500 on an exceptional basis. Under the circumstances, the Advisory Committee recommended approval of the Secretary-General's request.

10. Turning to the proposed budget for UNFICYP for 2008/09, she said that the Advisory Committee recommended approval of the Secretary-General's proposals, except for those relating to the establishment of a Senior Legal Adviser post (P-5) and the upward reclassification of three posts; while it agreed that the Force should have access to legal advice it believed that the Senior Legal Adviser's envisaged functions could be performed adequately at the P-4 level. As the mandate of the Force had remained stable since its inception in 1964, the Advisory Committee did not consider the upward reclassifications to be required at the present time.

11. Turning to the Advisory Committee report on the financing of MONUC (A/62/781/Add.8), she said that the Advisory Committee recommended that the Mission's proposed budget for 2008/09 should be reduced by $3,695,900. One of the major influences on the budget proposal was the electoral support which MONUC was due to provide pursuant to Security Council resolution 1797 (2008). The associated costs of that support were estimated at $88,269,800. The Advisory Committee noted that estimates were predicated on the assumption that the elections would be held in the second half of 2008 and that a delay would have an impact on requirements. The Advisory Committee expected developments in that regard to be monitored and the expenditure of such resources to be closely aligned with the objective of carrying out the elections.

12. Further factors affecting the estimates included the priority placed by the Mission, in accordance with resolution 1794 (2007), on addressing the security challenges posed by armed groups in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Mission's decision to consolidate its three regional offices into two, in order to strengthen decentralization in that part of the country. The Advisory Committee had requested the Secretariat to monitor the impact of the restructuring on the Mission's implementation of its mandate and to report on that matter, and on any resulting economies and efficiencies, in the next budget submission for MONUC.

13. The Advisory Committee recommended approval both of the temporary positions to support the local elections and of the posts requested for the regularization of the positions of individual contractors and casual daily workers performing skilled functions, largely in the Security and Safety Section and

Integrated Support Services; such posts and positions accounted for the bulk of the additional 1,019 posts and positions requested for 2008/09. The Advisory Committee also noted that the proposed electoral assistance positions would contribute to national capacity-building.

14. With regard to the proposed Strategic Planning Cell with responsibilities including the development of benchmarks and an indicative timeline for the gradual drawdown of MONUC, the Advisory Committee, acknowledging that the Mission should enhance coordination with the United Nations Country Team during the transitional phase, did not object to designating an entity in the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for that function.

15. In view of the increased emphasis on security sector reform in the Mission's new post-election mandate, the Advisory Committee recommended approval of the establishment and proposed staffing of the new Security Sector Reform Unit. Given the importance of supporting the analytical capabilities of MONUC, the Advisory Committee also recommended approval of the proposed staffing changes for both the Joint Operations Centre and the Joint Mission Analysis Cell.

16. In view of the existing staffing situation in the Office of the Special Representative, the Advisory Committee recommended approval of the P-4 post requested for an Administrative Officer, but not the P-3 post requested. Similarly, taking into account the existing staffing situation in the Office of the Deputy Special Representative (Resident Coordinator/ Humanitarian Coordinator), the Advisory Committee recommended approval of the position of Administrative Assistant (United Nations Volunteer) but not the post of Coordination Assistant (Field Service).

17. With regard to the request for three temporary positions for Conduct and Discipline Officers in Bunia, Goma and Bukavu, the Advisory Committee noted that the Conduct and Discipline Team currently consisted of 13 staff. In the Advisory Committee's view, it was logical to move some conduct and discipline personnel to the east of the country, together with the staff and contingent personnel being redeployed. Accordingly, it recommended that some existing staff of the Conduct and Discipline Team be redeployed to Bunia, Goma and Bukavu. Should a need for additional conduct and discipline staff subsequently arise, posts should be requested and fully justified in the next budget submission.

18. Lastly, the Secretary-General proposed an increase of some 235 per cent for training-related travel. Requirements for training, including travel, had increased from an estimated $1,613,100 for 5,373 staff and military and police personnel in 2007/08 to $4,359,800 for 9,446 personnel in 2008/09. In the absence of adequate justification for such large increases, the Advisory Committee recommended, on the basis of the current level of expenditure, that the estimates be reduced to $673,700 for training and $640,400 for training-related travel.

19. **Ms. Pataca** (Angola), speaking on behalf of the African Group on agenda item 144, acknowledged the contribution of MONUC to the peace and security of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and therefore to the stability of the entire Great Lakes region. Like all other peacekeeping missions, MONUC should receive sufficient resources to fulfil its mandate.

20. Recalling that the Security Council, by its resolution 1797 (2008), had authorized MONUC to assist the Congolese authorities in the organization, preparation and conduct of local elections, the Group was pleased to note that the proposed budget of the Mission for 2008/09 called for the provision of funds for logistical and technical support to the Government and electoral authorities. It noted that most of the net increase in civilian positions requested in the proposed budget related to that function, though some were temporary posts.

21. Concerned at the high projected vacancy rate for international staff and United Nations police, and noting that although the Mission recruited an average of 30 new staff per month, staff turnover was high, with 25 per month leaving, the Group believed that if the current situation continued, the Mission would be less effective and would incur recurring training costs. It regretted that the Committee, at the first part of its resumed session, had not taken the opportunity to address the proposed harmonization of conditions of service, which might have helped to address the problem, and agreed with the Advisory Committee that a full analysis of the underlying causes of the high staff turnover should be made.

22. The Group noted the adjustments to the Mission's structure proposed by the Secretary-General in order to improve efficiency, and the cost savings being pursued, but cautioned that such measures should not be to the detriment of the work of the Mission. As a detailed review and assessment of quick-impact projects had determined the continued need for them, the Group emphasized the importance of the projects in the fields identified in the report of the Secretary-General on the budget for the Mission for the period from 1 July 2008 to 30 June 2009 (A/62/755), which included improving local medical educational and sanitation infrastructure, developing short-term employment-generating projects in support of peacebuilding and political stability, the rule of law and human rights, the protection of and support to vulnerable groups and improving civil-military cooperation.

23. **Mr. Tawana** (South Africa), speaking on agenda item 144, said that his delegation valued the efforts of all peacekeeping personnel. The Mission played a critical role in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, particularly in addressing the crisis in the Kivus and in protecting the civilian population. However, the heavy concentration of its personnel in the east of the country should not lead to security vacuums or expose the Mission to weakness in other areas of potential or actual high tension.

24. In the context of the electoral assistance which the Security Council, by its resolution 1797 (2008), had authorized MONUC to provide to the Congolese authorities, his delegation welcomed the Mission's work to rebuild democratic institutions, with the involvement of other African States.

25. Recalling the unprecedented scale of the Organization's assistance for previous elections in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, it also welcomed the provision made in the proposed Mission budget for assistance with further elections in the future as an investment in the long-term peace and stability of the country and the region. The resource requirements proposed, including the conversion of posts in connection with electoral assistance, should be supported without reservation. Lastly, his delegation hoped that the reduction of the proposed Mission budget for 2008/09 by $3,695,900 recommended by the Advisory Committee would not affect the Mission's ability to fulfil its large mandate.

26. **Mr. Lukwiya** (Uganda), speaking on agenda item 144, said that, as peacekeeping operations contributed significantly to maintaining international peace and security, adequate funding was essential to ensuring that they could fulfil their mandates. Most of the resources requested by the Secretary-General in the proposed budget for MONUC were to be devoted to providing a response to Security Council resolutions 1794 (2007) and 1797 (2008), and therefore to addressing security challenges posed by armed groups in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and to assisting the Congolese authorities with local elections. Pacification and continued stability in the country, particularly its eastern frontier, was a requirement for the stability of the entire Great Lakes region. Electoral assistance, meanwhile, would help to strengthen the country's democratic institutions.

27. His delegation welcomed the cost-saving proposal of making more use of the Entebbe Support Base, to avoid having to send equipment for inspection, maintenance and repair to Kinshasa, and to provide information technology and communications support and freight forwarding services to missions in the region, including the United Nations Integrated Office in Burundi (BINUB) and the United Nations Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS). Developing the concept of a regional support base at Entebbe would bring about more gains in efficiency for the Organization.

28. **Mr. Torres Lépori** (Argentina), speaking on agenda items 143 and 144, said that his delegation supported without reservation the mandate of UNFICYP and its role in bringing peace, security and normalization. As Argentina was a major contributor of troops to the Force, his delegation was concerned at the long delays in reimbursement, and urged timely payment of the sums due.

29. Other concerns which his delegation would explore further in the informal consultations included the cost difference between using commercial air services and using charter air services to rotate contingents, and the progress made in updating accommodation for troops in sectors 1 and 2.

30. His delegation shared the views of others regarding MONUC, and wished to express its support for the Mission's electoral assistance role and its concern over high vacancy rates.

31. **Mr. Sena** (Brazil), speaking on agenda items 143 and 144, said that his delegation shared the concerns expressed by the representative of Argentina regarding delays in reimbursement of countries contributing troops to UNFICYP and regarding the conditions of service of those troops.

32. The Committee should ensure that MONUC received the funding it needed to fulfil its expanded mandate, particularly the important role of helping the Government to prepare and conduct local elections and to implement quick-impact projects, with a view to making progress towards national recovery, improving communications, generating short-term employment and consolidating the rule of law.

33. Suitable funding was also required for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration efforts in the east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, focusing on former combatants and children associated with armed groups. Lastly, his delegation wished to acknowledge the role of many African countries in helping to rebuild democratic institutions in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

34. **Mr. Afifi** (Egypt), speaking on agenda items 143 and 144, said that his delegation agreed with the views expressed by the representatives of Argentina and Brazil regarding timely reimbursement to troop-contributing countries, a problem which arose in many peacekeeping missions, not just UNFICYP, and which must be resolved.

35. Reaffirming its continued support for MONUC, his delegation said that it would work with the Committee to ensure that that Mission received the resources it needed to operate effectively and help to bring peace and security to the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The meeting rose at 11 a.m.